



Professionalism, Competition and Division of Labour

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PROFESSIONALISMUS, WETTBEWERB UND ARBEITSTEILUNG

PROFESSIONALISM, COMPETITION AND DIVISION OF LABOUR

PROFESSIONALISME, COMPETITION ET REPARTITION DES TRAVAUX

E. STUBKJAER

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Wunschgemäß soll dieses Referat auf gemeinsame Züge in den beiden vorausgehenden Referaten /8/ und /2/ aufmerksam machen, welche die organisatorischen Bedingungen behandeln, unter denen die Vermessungsingenieure arbeiten.

Das Verhältnis zwischen Professionalismus, Wettbewerb und Arbeitsteilung innerhalb von Organisationen wird eingehender erörtert.

Die zwei Referate werden insbesondere hinsichtlich der Beziehungen kommentiert, die zwischen professioneller Beratung, freiem Wettbewerb und der ständig weiter ausgebauten Organisation des öffentlichen Lebens bestehen. Dieser Ausbau bewirkt u.a., dass eine steigende Anzahl Vermessungsingenieure in privaten oder öffentlichen Betrieben Anstellung findet, und dass der öffentlich bestellte Vermessungsingenieur nicht mehr nur Personen, sondern auch diese Betriebe in seiner Kundschaft finden wird.

Das Thema "Service to Society" braucht eine Ergänzung mit konkreten Hinweisen. Es wird vorgeschlagen, dass die betreffenden nationalen Vermessungsingenieur-Vereine auch die Einsicht von politischem Charakter, die ihre Mitglieder latent besitzen, auszunutzen suchen.

SUMMARY

This paper shall draw attention, as requested, to common features in the two preceding papers /8/ and /2/, both of which are concerned with the organizational conditions of the task of being a surveyor.

The relationships between professionalism, competition and division of labour are discussed explicitly. The two papers are commented, especially with reference to the relationships between professionalism, competition and the increasing organization of society. This organization implies that a growing number of sur-

veyors are being employed by public institutions or in private enterprises, and that the practising surveyor will have these institutions and enterprises as his clients.

The theme "Service to Society" needs a more operational elaboration. It is suggested that the national associations should exploit also the political understanding of the professional problems and tasks, of which their members are in possession.

RESUME

Cette contribution veut surtout souligner les traits communs aux écrits précédents /8/ et /2/, qui tous deux, concernent les conditions d'organisation dans lesquelles travaillent les géomètres.

Les relations entre professionalism, compétition et répartition des travaux sont exposées de manière explicite. Ensuite sont commentés les deux écrits, plus spécialement les relations entre professionalism, compétition et organisation accrue de la société, qui entre autres implique que, de plus en plus de géomètres sont employés par des services publics ou par des bureaux privés et que la clientèle du géomètre ne se limitera plus seulement à des personnes mais s'étendra également à ces services et bureaux.

La notion "Service to Society", nécessite une définition plus concrète. Les différentes associations nationales de géomètres sont invitées à essayer de tirer parti des connaissances acquises dans le domaine politique par leurs membres.

1. Introduction: Problems and Premises.

It is a common human situation to face conflicting demands. As surveyors, we wish to maintain human relationships with our clients and colleagues but, at the same time, we have to submit, to a certain extent, to the conditions of competition, because society at large is characterized by materialism and competition. This conflict has become serious now, because the personal advice, which has been an essential part of our ideological foundation, is affected, not only by the mentality of competition, but also by the division of labour, bureaucracy and greater interest in interdisciplinary tasks.

How shall we react to this situation? FIG includes representatives from all parts of the world, with very different societal systems and unequal conditions of work for the professional surveyor.

It may be claimed that it is a usual occurrence that governmental affairs have expanded greatly during the last generation. This statement would certainly be valid for the OECD-countries, but it would hardly cover the situation in COMECON-countries. Therefore, it is adequate to remark, that the problems in this

paper are formulated on premises which, globally, may be rather restricted in their reference.

I shall try to characterize, on the basis of these premises, some conflicts in the basic values of the surveying profession, and suggest possible solutions.

This paper is mainly addressed to members of the governing boards and committees of the surveying associations of the FIG member countries. It is them, who have to weigh the pros and cons of the matter, and, in the long run, direct the character of the surveying profession throughout the world.

2. Professionalism, Competition and Division of Labour - a Discussion of Principles.

What is the difference between professionalism, competition and division of labour?

When we consider our daily work, it is typical for professionalism, that one person, the professional, assists another person, the client, at his or her request. In principle this refers to a personal relationship. The client regards his own situation as unique, and, consequently, the assistance also has to be presented as unique and be sympathetic to the client's situation. The assistance must be comprehensive because, if the client has to seek advice from many sides, he or she will be confused. This advice, due to the personal and specific character of the assistance, cannot be considered as a commodity, which is offered to a market.

It is typical in the competitive situation for several producers to the same market to offer interchangeable commodities or services. They are offered at the highest price, which the market can be assumed to bare. The relationship between buyer and seller is limited to a minimum, which is defined by their mutual contract.

Where the relationships are dominated by the division of labour several professions or trades co-operate to perform a task: In doing so they supplement each other with their different expertise (horizontal division of labour). The client has formerly been expected to "conduct this concert". However, it, commonly, happens that a superior-inferior relationship is established (vertical division of labour). By this latter practice the personal relationship to the client or the task will be diminished, as the internal situation of the organisation, its norms and procedures, become more important. Mr. Teversham discusses some consequences of this in his paper /8/.

If the organization is a governmental bureaucracy the interest in individual, concrete business rationality has to be weighted against the consideration, that every citizen shall have equity of treatment.

The above exposition is wilfully made more abstract to emphasize the differences. However, both the preceding papers /2/ and /8/ show that all three types of relationships are present in the surveyors' everyday situation. Therefore, it is an important issue to suggest how this obvious conflict between the three types of relationships can be solved by a standard of practice.

3. Discussion on the Conflict of Values.

Mr. Jørgensen has given a valuable illustration of how an employed surveyor has to change roles several times a day and, consequently, also change values. Mr. Teversham presents an inspiring treatment of the relationship between professionalism and competition, and I should like to comment on this.

Some years ago, the same topic was dealt with from the managerial point of view, e.g. by Mr. Kenneth R. Andrews in the Harvard Business Review /1/. There is a general agreement on the characteristics of a profession. However, in opposition to the view which is expressed by Mr. Teversham, Mr. Andrews thinks, that managers do not pay much attention to formalized training and corporative professional privilege. Managers do not limit themselves to specific fields but, it is claimed, their special quality is "to solve problems beyond the reach of other professions" /1, page 60/.

Both agree that the manager, normally, is responsible to an employer or a board of directors, and that the professional is responsible to the client. However, this is a distinction which needs modification.

As was stated above, governmental affairs have expanded greatly. Mention is made of the fact that the restraints of trade, to an increasing extent, impose obligations on the manager. These obligations often exceed the contractual obligations. Furthermore, the expansion of the state bureaucracy and the increased organization of society at large implies that the personal character of the assistance of the professional is reduced, because it has developed that the client is not a person, but a public institution or a private enterprise.

If there should be any reality in the idea of personal assistance - and, according to my opinion, there should be - then we might consider whether it is useful to discern between business, which is requested by individuals, and business requested by institutions or enterprises.

Mr. Teversham suggests that the rules of conduct concerning advertisement etc. should be reviewed. I agree with that and would suggest, further, a differentiation of the rules according to whether the advertisements are addressed mainly to persons or to organizations.

4. Service to Society.

The above mentioned considerations of the internal interests of the profession should be supplemented with an assessment of the needs of the environment. "Service to Society" is the primary purpose, but how do we make the slogan operational in practice?

One might discern between project work and maintenance work, e.g. updating the cadastral system. Both are indispensable to society, but attention is concentrated, naturally, on project work more so than on the daily maintenance of the system. This is very unfortunate.

The maintenance work provides for our sustenance. Therefore, it is essential that the profession can give a convincing account of the societal importance of this work, which is ours by privilege of authorization.

Project work has a different character depending on whether it is derived from new technology or whether it is derived from new legislation, because the degree of "Service to Society" is entirely different between these two. New technology is normally brought into service to perform tasks which result in a reduced use of human resources, with corresponding less risk of mistakes, or to perform more quickly or more comfortably. Under some circumstances this results in quicker responses, etc. for the client. Apart from this it depends, presumably, on the tariffing authority as to what extent society will benefit from these technological developments.

Project work, which is related to new legislation, will have a more direct bearing upon society, since new legislation is, largely, the result of the treatment of a societal problem. If the profession - the civil servant as well as the private practising surveyor - receives the finished legislation and administers it as a faithful servant, then the profession does not achieve all that is possible (or desirable).

I would maintain that the profession should offer its contribution, also when the legislation is being prepared. I have mentioned earlier the effort which has been made by The Danish Surveying Association, concerning the rationalizing of the organization of administration /7/. This may be very well, but I suggest that, globally, we should take a step further. We should, as Mr. Robert Steel has so adequately expressed in his address to the FIG congress 1977, "place the profession's corporate wisdom at the disposal of government". The profession should "make its contribution to public debates on matters in which it is competent to express a professional view" /6, page 81/.

This implies

- that we recognize that we, as individuals, are both surveyors and private persons with different political opinions
- that, individually, we can combine our understanding of justice with our professional insight

- that the association can manage to maintain a fruitful discussion and can present the views expressed so that the unity of the profession is confirmed.

When the profession has formed its opinion it can take part in projects and committee work. There, one could eventually compete with adjacent professions about which part of the complex of problems each of them is best able to administer.

The competition, which takes place in the commodity-producing trades, is, normally, at the retail-stage and, in the case of the professions, seems to have shifted to the point where the tasks are defined. In each country different professions compete with, but, supplement each other, when the tasks are defined. At the same time they preserve their own professional integrity, because the subsequent work can be performed separately by each profession.

I am well aware that, especially the suggestion, that the associations might initiate a debate with a political accent can be difficult to realize in some societies, where, in economic life, one does not discuss politics, and where civil servants have other reasons not to express their political opinions.

However, I do claim that it is in the interest of the associations to provide a sound framework for discussion and to break some traditions in order to exploit the political understanding of the professional problems and tasks, which their members may possess. In this way we, as a profession, can contribute directly to the reduction of societal problems.

At the FIG Valuation Seminar, Edinburgh, 1980, Mr. D.N.I. Pearce expounded the effort of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in establishing valuation standards /5/. I have taken much inspiration from Mr. Pearce's statements, and I suggest that others might do the same.

5. Closing Remark: Service to Members.

At the outset it was claimed that conflicts are a very essential part of human life. The views were addressed, largely, to members of the associations' boards and committees. These people also face a conflict: On the one hand they shall promote the interest of the association, on the other hand they shall respect the freedom of their members. "Service to Society" applies to the relationship of the profession to society, but it also applies to the attitude of the individual boards to the members of their own professional society.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTEERIK STUBKJÆR

Erik Stubkjaer, born 1941, graduated as a surveyor in 1964. Post-graduate degree of licentiate (equivalent to a Ph.D.) after presenting the thesis: "Lines of development in the history of (Danish) cadastral land registration with special reference to the collaboration with the other public registers of real property", 1969.

Employment in private practise. License in 1971.

1971-76 employed by the Ministry of Finance in a department dealing with organization, effectivity, and procurement. Secretary and later chairman of the department's Property Data Committee, dealing with state and municipal information systems based on real property and housing data, and used for administrative and urban planning purposes.

February 1977 into the professorship of cadastral land registration (property registration) which was moved - together with the whole education of surveyors in Denmark - from the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Copenhagen, to the newly established Aalborg University Centre.

At the time being his main professional interests are property theory, professionalism and computer cartography.